- Loans upto Rs. 50,000/- have been made collateral and margin free and the requirement of 'No Dues Certificate' have been dispensed with.
- Banks have been advised to provide all eligible farmers with Kisan Credit Cards.
- Banks have been instructed to achieve financial outreach through provison of a General Credit Card to households, to open "No Frills" accounts with limited overdraft facilities, to extend financial outreach by utilizing services of Civil Society Organisation like Farmers Clubs, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Post Offices as Business Facilitator/Business Correspondent Model, etc.

Concessions and duties for pharmaceutical sector

†4198. SHRIBANWARI LAL KANCHHAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pharmaceutical industries and pharmaceutical drugs which are directly related to the health of the people of the country, have been denied concessions and proper duty; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) In this year's budget (2008-09), a concessional exicse duty @8% has been provided on all pharmaceuticals including drugs and medicines. General SSI exemption is also available to pharma sector. Further, specified life saving drugs and bulk drugs for their manufacture attracts nil/5% basic customs duty. Such drugs are also exempted from exicse duty. In addition, Government had also provided concessional rate of 5%/ nil basic customs duty on specified R&D equipment for pharma and bio-technology sectors, for importers/manufacturers having research and development wing registered with the Department of Scientific & industrial Reserach, in the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Policy for sanctioning of loans

†4199. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have been taken or proposed to be taken by Government to review drawbacks in the policy being followed by banks and financial institutions for sanctioning loan and its recovery for the unprivileged section, the unemployed youth, labourers and farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof, as on date; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Lending to agriculture and weaker sections and progress in lending/ recovery to these sections of the population is monitored/reviewed periodically by the Government/RBI at different fora like Block Level Bankers' Committee (BLBC), District Consultative Committee (DCC) and State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBCs), etc.

† Original notice of the question was recsived in Hindi.